

Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

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R 312042Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9199

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

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GUATEMALA FOR ROCAP

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EWWT, HO

SUBJECT: MARITIME AFFAIRS-CONASA

REF: TEGUCIGALPA 0419

1. REFTEL REPORTED APPROACH BY LOCAL REPRESENTATIVES OF COMPANIA NAVIERA AGUILA, S.A. (CONASA). SUBSEQUENTLY TWO OFFICIALS OF THE COMPANY CALLED ON AMBASSADOR JAN 30 AND PRESENTED COMPLETELY DIFFERENT VIEW, APPROACH, AND FACTUAL BACKGROUND. WHILE EMBASSY DID NOT PROBE CAUSE FOR DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PRESENTATIONS, APPARENTLY LOCAL OFFICIALS WERE SPEAKING FOR THEIR OWN INTERESTS RATHER THAN THAT OF THE COMPANY.

2. MANNY LEVY, OPERATIONAL MANAGER OF CONASA, AND AURELIO (RICK) ESTRADA, VICE PRESIDENT AND DIRECTOR, NOTIFIED EMBASSY THAT CONASA HAS SUFFERED FINANCIAL LOSSES DUE TO CLOSURE OF PUERTO CORTES FOLLOWING HURRICANE FIFI AND SUBSEQUENT LOW NOV. AND DEC. TO PROTECT INVESTMENT AND KEEP DEBT REPAYMENTS CURRENT, COMPANY HAS CHARTERED ITS ONE VESSEL, THE MORAZAN, TO A NORWEGIAN COMPANY TO BE USED IN THE VENEZUELAN TRADE.

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THE CHARTER FOR THE CONTAINERSHIP IS FOR ONE YEAR.

3. MR. LEVY IS TO SPEAK TO CABEI JAN. 31. CABEI HAS PROVIDED LOAN FUNDS TO CONASA. THE STATUS OF THIS LOAN ARRANGEMENT, UNDER CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH THE VESSEL WILL NOT BE CALLING AT A CENTRAL AMERICAN PORT, IS TO BE DISCUSSED. LEVY IS CONFIDENT, HOWEVER, THAT CHARTER INCOME WILL FULLY COVER THE DEPT REPAYMENTS AND ALL OTHER OBLIGATIONS OF THE COMPANY FOR THE COMING YEAR.

4. LEVY STATED HIS INTENTION TO ATTEMPT TO REESTABLISH SERVICE TO HONDURAS FROM MIAMI WITH A SMALLER CONTAINERSHIP WITHIN THE NEXT SIX MONTHS. HE BELIEVES A SMALLER SHIP WOULD BE ADEQUATE TO THE VOLUME OF TRAFFIC AND COULD BE OPERATED AT A PROFIT.

5. VERY IMPORTANT, LEVY STATED THAT THE COMPANY'S RELATIONSHIP WITH NICARAGUA HAS BEEN EXCELLENT AND THAT THE COOPERATION EXTENDED BY THE MANAGUA OFFICIALS HAD MADE POSSIBLE THE CONTINUED SERVICE OF THE MORAZAN PRIOR TO THE DISRUPTIVE EFFECTS OF HURRICANE FIFI. HE LEFT THEIR IMPRESSION THAT NICARAGUAN TREATMENT OF CONASA WAS ESPECIALLY COOPERATIVE.

6. MR. LEVY ASKED NO ASSISTANCE FROM THE EMBASSY TOWARD THE RESOLUTION OF CONASA'S PRESENT CONDITION. HE STATED THAT THE SOLE PURPOSE OF HIS VISIT WAS TO KEEP THE EMBASSY INFORMED OF THE INTENTIONS OF THE COMPANY. THE AID DIRECTOR RAISED CERTAIN QUESTIONS CONCERNING CONASA'S RELATIONSHIP WITH CABEI. MR. LEVY STATED HE WOULD RESPOND FOLLOWING HIS DISCUSSIONS WITH THE BANK.
SANCHEZ

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